

I remember in 1993 reading an article in *Forbes* magazine, one of the Nation's most conservative magazines. This article said that we had quadrupled the Justice Department just between 1980 and 1993 and that Federal prosecutors were falling all over themselves trying to find cases to prosecute. We have kept on expanding the Justice Department since then and have had explosive growth in the number of Federal crimes.

We have had far too many cases where overzealous prosecutors have prosecuted high-profile defendants just so that a prosecutor could make a name for himself. I remember the totally unjustified case against Secretary of Labor, Ray Donovan, in which, after he was acquitted, made the famous statement: "Where do I go to get my reputation back?"

Our Federal Government has become far too big, and it is far too powerful. We all have heard how particularly the IRS is running roughshod over individual citizens. *Newsweek* magazine a few years had on its cover: "Inside The IRS—Lawless, Abusive, and Out of Control."

Unfortunately, while there are many good Federal prosecutors, there are far too many of them and, unfortunately, some who, like the IRS, are lawless, abusive, and out of control.

Mr. Speaker, there are now so many laws, rules, and regulations on the books today that people are being prosecuted for violating laws they didn't even know were in existence.

Paul Larkin, whom I quoted earlier, said that we need a "mistake of law" defense. An innocent mistake is not supposed to be criminal, but a zealous prosecutor can make even an innocent mistake look criminal, and there is an old saying that a prosecutor could indict a ham sandwich if he wanted to.

Almost everyone has violated some tax law—they are so convoluted and confusing—and almost every person in any type of business has unknowingly violated some law, rule, or regulation for which they could be prosecuted.

That is why, yesterday, we had at our hearing a conservative Republican like Senator JOHN CORNYN, a former justice of the Texas Supreme Court; and Senator CORY BOOKER, a liberal Democrat; and a conservative like Representative SENSENBRENNER; and a liberal like Representative BOBBY SCOTT—all joining together to urge reform.

Lastly, let me mention one other aspect of our Nation's crime problem. In my years as a judge, I handled over 10,000 cases because probably 97 or 98 percent of the defendants enter some type of guilty plea and then apply for probation.

Every day, for 7½ years, I would read several 8- or 10-page reports into a defendant's background, and I would read, "Defendant's father left home when defendant was 2 and never returned," or "Defendant's father left home to get a pack of cigarettes and never came back."

Mr. Speaker, over 90 percent of the defendants in felony cases in my court came from father-absent households. Drugs and/or alcohol are involved in most cases, but they are secondary to the absent father problem.

Years ago, I read a report that said 57 percent of marriages break up in arguments, disputes, or disagreements about money. As government has grown so much at all levels, Federal, State, and local over the past 40 or 50 years, it has become a major factor in the breakup of the American family by taking so much money and making it so much more difficult for families to stay together.

This, Mr. Speaker, has had a major impact on our Nation's crime problem.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JODY B. HICE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in order to stand in strong support of a foundational American law and principle that I feel has been woefully neglected recently. I rise in defense of the First Amendment, which in part states: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

Due to the recent Supreme Court decision on marriage, I feel that the First Amendment is at risk of being horribly violated in the name of judicial activism. I am deeply concerned for the First Amendment rights of all American citizens and feel strongly that the Court did not act within its limited constitutional constraints.

Due to this decision, Mr. Speaker, there now exists a direct conflict between the law of man and the law of God, and we have tens of millions of Americans who are now facing a dilemma to choose between their faith and their religious convictions and the government. As Christians, we must obey the law of God.

This decision by the Supreme Court is devastating, and it directly ignored the will of the people and the will of most States. It was a direct rejection of previously held decisions; it rejected dozens of State laws and Constitutions, and, yes, it rejected God's law.

In effect, this decision took the people's prerogative and the States' prerogative and threw it out the window in favor of incorrectly defining and interpreting that which is detrimental to our First Amendment, the First Amendment which guarantees not only the freedom of speech, but also the freedom of religious expression without fear of harassment or penalty from our government.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we must find different avenues where citizens and lawmakers can get involved to address this egregious offense to our First Amendment. In my home State of Georgia, local legislatures are considering the

Pastor Protection Act which would endeavor to ensure that no pastor or minister or house of faith would be forced to perform a wedding that they believe violates their religious beliefs. That is good, but we must do more. It is a good first step.

Frankly, it is my hope that other States would raise the mantle of our Constitution and protect it and protect not just pastors and ministers, but all citizens, including businessmen and -women.

In addition to State action, Congress also must be heavily involved at this time. As an initial step, I am personally proud to have cosponsored H.R. 2802, the First Amendment Defense Act, offered by my good friend and colleague Representative RAÚL LABRADOR from Idaho.

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This bill includes many provisions that would both reaffirm and safeguard our First Amendment rights. It would ensure that the Federal Government could not penalize institutions, churches, and individuals for simply exercising their First Amendment right.

Furthermore, it prohibits the Federal Government from blocking access due to deeply held religious convictions from those who are seeking grants or licenses or contracts or accreditation or tax-exempt status. I believe this bill would help greatly to deal with the uncertainty that currently is held by millions.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, it is my sincere hope and desire that we can all come together to defend our First Amendment. I think DANIEL WEBSTER said it best when he said:

If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our country will go on to prosper, but if we and our posterity neglect its instructions and authority, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us and bury all our glory in profound obscurity.

I, for one, Mr. Speaker, will continue fighting for our First Amendment.

HIGHWAY TRUST FUND

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. RIBBLE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. RIBBLE. Mr. Speaker, this afternoon, this body is going to come together and in bipartisan fashion—I think that is normally a good thing, in bipartisan fashion—be able to applaud themselves for fixing the highway trust fund. Like the proverbial magician that takes the shiny object in one hand to distract you, they will, with sleight of hand, with the other hand borrow \$8.1 billion when the American people aren't watching.

I want to refer you to the chart on my left. You will see three lines. I want to talk about the bottom two first.

The very bottom line is the revenue line. That is the amount of money we receive from excise taxes and gasoline taxes to pay for roads and bridges and infrastructure. The red line above it is